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NEW INAUGURATION DAY.

Committee Recommends the Last Thursday in April.

The national committee appointed to inquire into the most favorable date for presidential inaugurations has finally hit upon the last Thursday in April. The suggestion seems wise to the Washington Star, for the reason "that only thus can the embarrassment of inauguration day falling upon Sunday be prevented. Under this system, of course, the occasion of the induction of the president into office can not be designated by a specific date, as is now the case with 'the fourth of March.' It must become known as 'Inauguration Day,' on the same principle on which 'Thanksgiving Day,' another movable celebration, is thus designated. In this there will be a slight gain in dignifying the significant occasions of the nation's year with titles." The Duluth (Minn.) News-Tribune considers that the prime reason for changing the date of inauguration is not that better weather may be secured for the ceremony, but for the purpose of "extending the length of the second, or short, session of congress, which is too brief for the transaction of the necessary business of the nation, which presses harder and harder on congress."

The New York Tribune opposes the change for the following reason: "In case inauguration day should be changed to the last Thursday in April, the terms of future presidents would not be four years or of equal length, but would necessarily vary according to the calendar. Looking back over the last quarter of a century, we find that the last Thursday of April was, in 1877, the 26th; in 1881, the 28th; in 1885, the 30th; in 1889, the 25th; in 1893, the 27th; in 1897, the 29th, and in 1901, the 25th. If, therefore, the proposed change had gone into effect during the latter part of Grant's administration, thus prolonging his second term nearly eight weeks in order to initiate the served two days more than eight years, and Garfield, had he lived, two days more; Cleveland five days less than four years, Harrison two days more, Cleveland, again, two days more, and McKinley's first term would have been four days short."

VOLCANO DESTROYS CITY.

The Lives Lost Are Said to Number 20,000.

St. Thomas (D. W. I.), May 8, 7 p. m.—The British steamer Roddam, Captain Freeman, which left St. Lucia Wednesday for Martinique, returned there at 5 o'clock this afternoon, bringing a report that the town of St. Pierre, Martinique, has been totally destroyed by volcanic disturbances in the island. Almost all the inhabitants of St. Pierre are said to have been killed. The Roddam reports that all the shipping in the port has also been destroyed. The Quebec Steamship Company's steamer Roraima is mentioned as lost with all on board. The Roddam was almost completely wrecked. Her captain was seriously burned and seventeen of her crew are dead.

New York, May 8.—Advices of increasing seismic and volcanic disturbances in the West Indies have been received here during the past three days, but tonight's dispatches from St. Thomas and other points speak of vast destruction and appalling fatalities.

The British steamer Roddam, Captain Freeman, which left St. Lucia on Wednesday for Martinique, returned there at 5 o'clock this afternoon, bringing the report of the St. Pierre catastrophe. The Roddam reports that all shipping in the port has also been destroyed. The Quebec steamer Roraima is mentioned as lost, with all on board. The steamer Roraima, Captain Huggah, left New York on April 26th for St. Thomas, where she arrived on May 2d. From St. Thomas she proceeded for St. Croix, Demarara, etc.

It was announced from St. Thomas last Saturday that St. Pierre had been covered with ashes to the depth of a quarter of an inch

as the result of the outbreak of Mont Pelee. The volcano and the town appeared to be enveloped in a fog. A second dispatch from St. Thomas, dated May 6th, said the flow of lava from Mont Pelee, which began last Saturday, had completely destroyed the Guerin factories, about two miles from St. Pierre. It was also reported that about 150 persons had disappeared and that a great panic prevailed in St. Pierre.

Another dispatch from St. Thomas, dated May 7th, said advices had been received from the island of St. Vincent, British West Indies, announcing that for some time the volcanoes had been active in the neighborhood of the Soufriere crater, which had been smoking and rumbling. Residents in the vicinity of the volcano were leaving for places of safety. This St. Thomas dispatch said further that cable communication with the island of Martinique was interrupted on the morning of May 7th, and that cable communication southward from St. Lucia, in the Windward islands, stopped suddenly the same afternoon. It was reported that volcanic craters on Dominica, British West Indies, were showing signs of activity.

The town of St. Pierre, the commercial capital of the French island of Martinique, is on the West Coast. It has only an open roadstead. The town has a population of about 25,000. The island of Martinique contains several extinct volcanoes, the highest point being Mont Pelee, with an altitude of 4420 feet. St. Pierre was settled by the French in 1635, and it is the largest town in the French West Indies. The place was well built and occupies a commanding position on the island. It is the center of commerce in the district in which it is situated. There is a railroad to Fort Royal, or Fort de France, the capital. This line was constructed in 1875.

St. Pierre is well known to all who have cruised in the West Indies. The city is the seat of one of the oldest Catholic institutions of learning in the New World. One of the sights of the place is a botanical garden of elaborate proportions.

Fuel Oil at Sea a Success.

The Matson Navigation Company's steamer Enterprise, the pioneer deep-water oil-burning steamship in the Pacific, has returned from Hilo, Hawaii Territory, completing her initial round trip with the new fuel. She was outfitted with tanks and oil-burning furnaces as an experiment. As many vessels sailing under other flags, particularly the Black sea mercantile fleet of Russia, have successfully used fuel oil for several years past, no doubt was entertained of the success of the Enterprise. Her tanks carry 750 tons, or 3000 barrels of crude oil. They were supposed to have sufficient capacity to carry her the round voyage. The estimate was a correct one, for she reached port with a full cargo of 2500 tons of sugar and enough crude oil still in her tanks to carry her a long distance further. The trip was made on schedule time each way.

Not only has the fuel bill of the Enterprise been greatly reduced, but the voyage was made with a crew of three firemen instead of the twelve employed when the vessel was a coal burner. Her experience is thus likely to influence the entire steam fleet sailing to and from this port. The Oceanic steamship Mariposa has had her furnaces altered for oil burning, and tanks have taken the place of her coal bunkers. Other steamships are sure to make similar changes, which will greatly expand the market for the crude oil product of this State.—S. F. Chronicle.

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